

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

AUGUST'19 (15 to 21 Aug)

Modern struggle for peace of mind

Mental health refers to our cognitive, behavioral, and emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel, and behave. The term 'mental health' is sometimes used to mean an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can affect daily life, relationships, and even physical health. Mental health also includes a person's ability to enjoy life - to attain a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. The WHO stresses that mental health "is not just the absence of mental disorder." Experts say we all have the potential to develop mental health problems, no matter how old we are, whether we are male or female, rich or poor, or which ethnic group we belong to. Interventions, focusing on raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health, are necessary for addressing the situation.

Determinants of mental health and mental disorders include not only individual attributes such as the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors and interactions with others, but also social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards,

working conditions, and community social supports. Poverty and low education levels are the key amongst these factors. Specific psychological and personality factors also contribute towards the vulnerability. Genetic factors also play some role. Treatment of mental health disorders is of utmost importance. Policy makers should be encouraged to promote availability of and access to cost-effective treatment of common mental disorders at the primary health care level.

Technology has improved the lives of many people, with almost half of adults in the United States unable to imagine life without their smart phone. While many people strongly agree that unplugging or taking a digital detox now and then is important for mental health, in reality, only 28 percent of those people periodically switch off from technology. Interactions on social media can have a major impact on an individual's well-being and satisfaction. Many studies have observed that more time spent on social media is associated with an increased risk of loneliness and depression, which poses the question: are unhappy people using social media, or does social media use affect happiness?

Research has shown that stress can sometimes be positive. It can make you more alert and help you

perform better in certain situations. However, stress has only been found to be beneficial if it is short-lived. All sorts of situations can cause stress. The most common involve work, money matters and relationships with partners, children or other family members. When you are stressed you may experience many different feelings, including anxiety, irritability or low self-esteem, which can lead to becoming withdrawn, indecisive and tearful.

People who report making a higher income tend to face higher levels of stress at work and don't necessarily experience higher job satisfaction, according to career platform LinkedIn. Based on a survey of 1,000 LinkedIn members currently employed in the U.S., researchers found that people who earn between \$51,000 and \$75,000 generally feel the least stressed. By contrast, of those who make an income of \$200,000 or more, nearly 70 percent said they feel stressed. So, it is a misconception we may have in our mind that developed countries are very happy or rich people are the happiest one in this world. Researchers have theorized that wealth makes us less generous because it makes us more isolated – and isolation also has a deleterious effect on happiness. Wealth is isolating for both psychological and physical reasons. Psychologically, the acquisition of

wealth—and more generally, possessions that signal high status—makes us want to distance ourselves from others. This may be due to a feeling of competition and selfishness that sets in with the acquisition of wealth or status.

The most common types of mental illness are anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and schizophrenia disorders. In psychology, the use of artistic methods to treat disorders and enhance mental health is known as art therapy. Art therapy is a therapeutic technique rooted in the idea that creative expression can foster healing and mental well-being. Art therapy integrates psychotherapeutic techniques with the creative process to improve mental health and well-being. Where an art class is focused on teaching technique or creating a specific finished product, art therapy is more about letting clients focus on their inner experience. In creating art, people are able to focus on their own perceptions, imagination, and feelings. Clients are encouraged to create art that expresses their inner world more than making something that is an expression of the outer world.

When you're frazzled by your morning commute, stuck in a stressful meeting at work, or fried from another

argument with your spouse, you need a way to manage your stress levels right now. That's where quick stress relief comes in. The fastest way to reduce stress is by taking a deep breath and using your senses—what you see, hear, taste, and touch—or through a soothing movement. By viewing a favorite photo, smelling a specific scent, listening to a favorite piece of music, tasting a piece of gum, or hugging a pet, for example, you can quickly relax and focus yourself. Of course, not everyone responds to each sensory experience in the same way. The key to quick stress relief is to experiment and discover the unique sensory experiences that work best for you.

For reference:-

- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318230.php>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-art-therapy-2795755>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm>
- <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/how-the-modern-world-makes-us-mentally-ill/>

Additional Readings:-

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/11/the-guardian-view-on-climate-crisis-what-can-we-do>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/14/the-guardian-view-on-treating-ebola-science-is-the-start>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/hong-kong-on-the-brink/article28984792.ece>
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